

# Midewin Volunteer Bird Monitoring Instructions

The monitoring will be a timed-search type of monitoring. Volunteers will search assigned areas for birds, recording the birds they see and/or hear and recording the amount of time spent monitoring. Being able to identify birds by sound isn't necessary, but is helpful. Over time you'll get to know the birds by both sight and sound. Areas will be assigned and volunteers will be asked to monitor the assigned area 3 – 5 times over the breeding season. Volunteers will walk the assigned area to do a good job of covering the entire tract. Care should be taken to avoid double counting birds. A new data sheet should be filled out for each visit. Data sheets should be turned in at the end of the breeding season.

We are especially interested in the following birds: loggerhead shrike, upland sandpiper, Henslow's sparrow, short-eared owl, northern harrier, red-headed woodpecker, any bittern or rail, sandhill crane, Cerulean warbler, and common moorhen. Please mark on the map where these birds were seen and notify Bill Glass at 815/423-2129 or [wglass@fs.fed.us](mailto:wglass@fs.fed.us).

Try to get a digital picture of any unknown birds and email them to Bill Glass for identification. It's very difficult to identify birds from verbal descriptions from memory. Direct any questions to Bill as well.

Here are some sources of bird songs on the internet:

<http://www.learnbirdsongs.com/> By Lane Elliott

<http://www.naturesongs.com/birds.html> North American Bird Sounds

<http://sirismm.si.edu/testperl/nasongkey.pl> Guide to North American Bird Songs and Sounds

## FAQs

**When do I to monitor?** During the breeding season from mid-May to mid-July.

**How often should I monitor?** 3 – 5 times minimum during the breeding season, spread out to cover the beginning, middle and end of the breeding season.

**What is the best time of day?** Usually early morning is best, when the birds tend to be more active and the winds lighter which make hearing bird songs easier. Sunrise to about 10am tends to be best, but other times are acceptable if the monitoring can't be done early.

**What weather is best?** Wind and rain can make observing and hearing birds difficult. It's best to avoid rain (a very light drizzle may be okay) and windy days. Heavy fog can make finding birds and your way around difficult. Avoid days with the chance of storms. You don't want to be out in the open during a lightning storm.

**How long do I need to spend monitoring?** We are leaving that up to you, however long you think it takes to cover your assigned area. Probably 1 ½ and 2 ½ hours. It would be best to do each survey at about the same time length for consistency.

**Should I have one route and keep to it?** If your area is small and you can totally cover it with a route, or if you want to remain on trails a route would be good. For larger areas a route that covered the entire area is too long to cover in one day, so it would be best to try and cover the entire area over several visits.

**What do I do with the data when I'm finished?** Please turn all data sheets and maps into Gemma Guenther, the Midewin Assistant Volunteer Coordinator. You may enter your hours into the Volgistics volunteer database located on the Midewin volunteer webpage. Data and volunteer hours submitted after September 1 are not likely to meet our deadlines for reports, so please submit data ASAP.

**Will I be issued a key to get in?** In most cases you will be issued a key and a placard. The placard must be placed in your windshield while your auto is on Midewin. Remember the use of the key and placard is for official business (monitoring) only. The key and placard doesn't allow you to give friends and family private tours. Inappropriate use of the key and placard will result in lose of these privileges.

**Can I take an assistant along?** We highly encourage that you monitor with a partner for safety reasons (especially if you don't have a cell phone). If your area is closed to the public or requires use of a private automobile on Midewin you need to limit helpers to just one (with the exception of kids). Make sure your partner also has a volunteer agreement signed and submitted. Volunteer agreements are located on the website to print.

Be Safe and Have fun!